

Using the Iceberg Analogy

The Iceberg model of behaviour explores what influences the way that we act and react. The model states that we are like icebergs, with our behaviour above the surface visible to others. The things that drive our behaviour are often hidden to others below the surface.

This means that behaviours that may challenge, in this case by autistic children may not always be clear and obvious.

Sometimes a slight change in circumstance can have a significant impact. It can be difficult to change behaviour without understanding and shifting what is happening “below the surface”.



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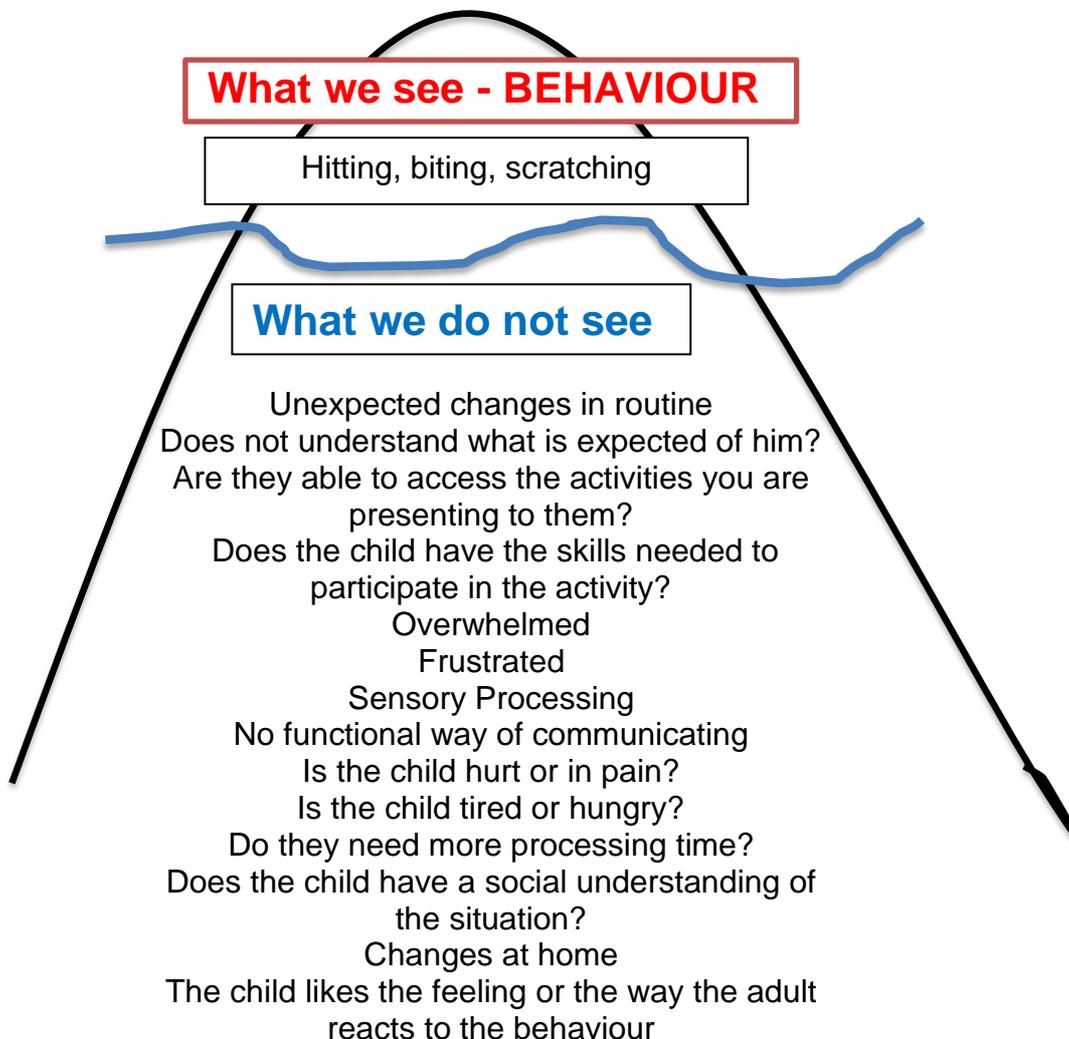


Sometimes we see the behaviours that challenge us and try to change them without addressing the understanding the reasons for behaviour. The Iceberg model can help us to identify the causes of the behaviours. We can then use this information to put into place appropriate strategies to support the child.

The Iceberg model is a tool designed to help us to discover the patterns that trigger a particular behaviour or behaviours that challenge. Iceberg diagrams help us to highlight and visually represent the underlying causes of a specific behaviour.

How to use an Iceberg:

Write the behaviour that you can see at the top of a blank iceberg and then beneath the line write the potential causes of the behaviour, adding as many as you can think of. Here is an example:



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Once you have identified reasons for the behaviour, start working through your list, removing factors that you know are not contributing to the behaviour. What you are left is likely to be the cause of the behaviour. Once you have this information, you will then be able to think about the appropriate strategies to support the child.

Alongside the Iceberg model, you may find it useful to record the behaviours for example, when and where the behaviours happen.